The Alexandria City Public Schools pass rate improved in four out of five SOL categories this year. ACPS still lags significantly behind the average Virginia district.

Alexandria's SOL Average Pass Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>ALX (21–22)</th>
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<th>% Difference</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<td>Writing</td>
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<td>+4.8%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>54%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>+3.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>53%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>+6.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Alexandria City Public Schools pass rate improved in four out of five SOL categories this year.

SOL scores rise post-COVID

ACPS still lags significantly behind the average Virginia district.

BY CAITLYN MEISNER

Alexandria City Public Schools’ standardized test passing rates increased overall in the 2022-2023 school year, a continuing trend from the 2021-2022 school year. For the second year in a row, ACPS improved on the prior year’s Standards of Learning marks in four of five categories. ACPS achievement still trails significantly behind the average Virginia school district in four of the five categories, which are reading, writing, history/social studies, math and science. ACPS scores are also well below the district’s performance during the 2018-2019 school year, which was the last full year prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this year’s continued rise post-COVID.

No stranger to special events, Bittersweet Catering celebrates 40 years.

BY KAITLIN MURPHY

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Alexandria businessman Jody Manor worked his way up through the company, starting as a catering waiter before becoming its owner in 1990. As the business grew, so did its footprint. In 1997, a cafe was added with outdoor seating. The cafe was public-facing right on King Street, appealing to the foot traffic of locals and visitors alike.

Cafe customers got to enjoy ingredients seasonally sourced, coffee roasted on-site, and fine wine by the glass. Chef Alberto Trevizo was joined by Jeffrey Allen, whose culinary work has earned him a place on Alexandria’s “Best of the City” list for 2023.

Recipe for success

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Castaneda named T&ES director

Adriana Castañeda is the new director of Alexandria’s Department of Transportation and Environmental Services after being appointed by City Manager Jim Parajon. Castañeda will be responsible for transportation systems and infrastructure, emergency weather planning and refuse collections for the city.

“Ms. Castañeda’s expertise and leadership will be exceptionally valuable to our ability to meet the needs of our residents effectively and efficiently,” Parajon said of the appointment. Previously, Castañeda was director of Bond and Construction management in Dallas, Texas, where she oversaw the capital infrastructure of activities of nearly 200 staff and a $23 million budget. Castañeda was also previously director of Mobility and Housing in Tracy, California, before coming to Alexandria.

-ivanpate@alextimes.com

Repaving maintenance scheduled

Alexandria’s Department of Transportation and Environmental Services will repair more than 561 miles of road, sidewalks and alleys in the city from September 11 to September 30. Streets to be repaired include West Glebe Road, King Street and North Pelham Street. Alexandria residents should avoid the temporary “No Parking” signs put up during construction in order to avoid a parking ticket or towing.

-ivanpate@alextimes.com

Agenda: Alexandria’s 25th season event

Agenda: Alexandria’s 25th season-opening event, taking place at the Lyceum on September 18 at 7 p.m., will center around climate change this year. The program, “Hot, Wet, and Wild! What Can Alexandrians do about Climate Change?” will include a discussion about how to combat climate change and reduce carbon emissions in Alexandria. Registration is $10, but members of Agenda: Alexandria can register for free using a coupon. Those interested in registering can do so at AgendaAlexandria.org.

Agenda: Alexandria is a non-partisan organization that debates issues in Alexandria. The organization hopes to raise $2,000 by the end of September.

-ivanpate@alextimes.com

CORRECTION: The Sept. 7, 2023 story “From machine gun belts to bed bug welts” stated that Afghan refugees received initial funding from states when they arrived in the U.S. In fact they received funding from the State Department, meaning the funds came from the federal government. The Times regrets the error. In addition, we want to clarify that Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area is separate from other Lutheran Social Services organizations elsewhere that aid refugees.

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Wilderness Kids to hold music festival

The inaugural Wilderness Kids Alexandria Music Festival is taking place on September 23 from noon to 5 p.m. at Burgundy Farm Country Day School. The festival will include local musical artists such as Hanoi Ragmen, Dogwood, Color School and Noise in the Basement in addition to youth bands such as Indigo Thursday, Pink Dog and Untitled. A Ben and Jerry’s treat truck and a local food truck will also be at the festival, which will include outdoor activities such as corn-hole, ping-pong, face-painting, a giant game of Jenga and a dunk tank. Admission is free, but $15 donations are encouraged.

Wilderness Kids, an organization that runs after school programs at George Washington Middle School and Francis Hammond Middle School, is hosting the festival. Sponsors include Alexandria Toyota, Ting Interest, James Crowe/Compass Realty, Latham & Watkins LLP, Baker Botts LLP, Jen Walker Realty and Simpson Development.

Alexandria Tutoring Consortium to expand

The Alexandria Tutoring Consortium is expanding its reading program Book Buddies for the 2023-2024 school year to reach 14 public elementary schools in the city. This expansion includes bringing Book Buddies to schools that don’t have the same program as schools such as Douglas MacArthur and George Mason and adding second-grade programs at Cora Kelly, Ferdinand Day and Jefferson-Houston.

“We are thrilled ATC will be serving all 14 elementary schools this year,” Carolyn Wooster, ACPS elementary literacy specialist, said. ATC is a nonprofit organization that recruits and trains volunteers to tutor Kindergarten through second-grade at reading. ATC hires volunteers to meet with students twice a week for 30 to 40 minutes and also accepts donations. Those interested in volunteering and donating can go to alexandriatutors.org.

Citizenship Day welcomes 25 new Americans

Alexandria City Hall hosted its 20th Citizenship Day ceremony for 25 naturalized citizens who took their Oath of Allegiance Tuesday. They were welcomed to the city and state by Mayor Justin Wilson, City Manager James Parajon, City Councilman Canek Aguirre and Kimberly Zanotti, D.C. field office director from Citizenship and Immigration Services. Zanotti led the new citizens – hailing from 25 different countries – in their Oath of Allegiance. More than 500 naturalized citizens have participated in this ceremony since 2003.

“We celebrate the rebirth of our democracy constantly,” Wilson said at the ceremony. “You are rebirthing our democracy by reenergizing our nation.”
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post-pandemic improvement, school leadership said it is looking for ways to boost pass rates at each school for the upcoming school year. In the September 7 school board meeting, ACPS Superintendent Melanie Kay-Wyatt, Ed.D., said she was excited to celebrate the achievement, but recognized there is still work to be done.

“I’m so excited to celebrate these numbers with our school populations who’ve worked so hard over the last few years,” Kay-Wyatt said. “This is a testament to their dedication.”

Reading pass rates decreased by a percentage point in the 2022-23 school year, but the rest of the core subjects saw either a two, three or four percentage point increase. Most notably, the math pass rate increased by four percentage points, which was an 8.2% gain from the 2021-22 school year.

Kay-Wyatt referenced pandemic learning loss – particularly in math and science – as roadblocks to increasing Virginia Department of Education SOL pass rates. In an Alexandria Times article from September 2022, the Times reported ACPS dropped several percentage pass points from pre-pandemic results. In science, for example, ACPS passing rates dropped from 67% in 2018-19 to 49% in 2021-22.

Clinton Page, ACPS’ chief of accountability and research, said in an interview this year’s results show that the school system is ultimately headed in the right direction.

“We continue to focus on the academic outcomes and meeting the needs of students … and addressing the challenges from the pandemic,” Page said. “It is a 100% affirmation of the work that was done by staff and students and the gains that we saw.”

Page also said leadership aims to focus on aligning priorities across the city when it comes to the instructional core subjects.

“Our focus has to be on teachers, students and the taught curriculum because that is what ultimately is going to leverage improvement and outcomes for our students,” Page said. “We’re really thinking about how we are supporting our students in terms of social-emotional [learning], as well as their connection to school and attendance.”

Kay-Wyatt said in the School Board meeting the gaps are closing between different student groups. The gap is closing between higher female pass rates and male pass rates; female students outperformed male students in each category, but male students are increasingly passing more.

Page added ACPS also wants to focus on building a staff culture, and on recruitment and retention of outstanding educators.

While ACPS matched the statewide SOL score in writing, with a 65% pass rate, Alexandria continues to lag significantly behind Virginia.

**City vs. State Average Pass Rates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>ALX (22-23)</th>
<th>VA (22-23)</th>
<th>% Difference*</th>
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<td>Reading</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>-17.8%</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>-22.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The % Difference is how Alexandria’s pass rate compares to the average school district in Virginia.
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☐ Pipes (Ashton, Dunhill, Savinelli, etc.)
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Joseph Gerald Hebert (Gerry), Voting Rights Attorney of Alexandria, Virginia passed away at the age of 74 on Sept. 7, 2023.

Gerry was born in Worcester, Massachusetts to Joseph Gerald Laurie Hebert and Adeline Agnes Whitehead Hebert on Feb. 13, 1949. A graduate of St. John’s High School in Shrewsbury, Gerry went on to earn his bachelor’s degree from Stonehill College and Juris Doctor from Suffolk University Law School.

A respected civil and voting rights attorney, Gerry worked in the U.S. Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division from 1973 to 1994. While at the DOJ, he won acclaim for his work in school desegregation cases and served as the lead attorney in voting rights and redistricting lawsuits, including several cases decided by the U.S. Supreme Court. Post-DOJ, Gerry spent time in private practice specializing in election law and the Voting Rights Act. His expertise led him to the Campaign Legal Center in 2004, serving as Executive Director until 2018, before retiring from the organization in 2021. Gerry was also an adjunct professor at Georgetown University Law Center and developed a thriving intern program for CLC. He also taught at University of Virginia, American University, and New York Law School. He was awarded the Wasserstein Fellowship at Harvard Law School and Mentor in Residence at Yale Law School.

In 2015, Gerry spearheaded the CLC effort to establish the Voting Rights Institute – a partnership with the American Constitution Society and Georgetown Law – which created opportunities for law students and graduates to learn how to litigate voting rights cases.

Gerry’s advocacy extended beyond his professional career. He served as PTA president at George Mason Elementary School and often delivered the morning announcements. He worked particularly hard to ensure that families of color were involved in their children’s education, and that the needs of George Mason Elementary were made known to the School Board.

As ASA soccer coach to many of Alexandria’s youth, Gerry shared his own athletic skills, always ending a weekly practice – at the request of the team – punting the ball straight up in the air, multiple stories high.

A man of strong faith and an enthusiastic choir member, Gerry served the Fairlington United Methodist Church community in many capacities including lay leader.

Gerry worked tirelessly to help Alexandrians in need, volunteering with ALIVE! Inc. since 1986. He dedicated his time and talents, serving as ALIVE’s president, director of development, chair of the furniture program, and Last Saturday food distribution coordinator. Earlier this year, Gerry was awarded Volunteer Alexandria’s 2023 Joan White Grassroots Volunteer Service Award for his commitment to ALIVE!’s mission, specifically for his work to open both of ALIVE!’s beautiful and welcoming food hubs, ensuring that Alexandrians maintained their integrity while receiving food and critical services.

Gerry approached his personal life with the same passion and purpose. He was omnipresent in his children’s lives as he filled the roles of brown bag lunch maker, short order breakfast cook, and overprotective parent. He could be found lifting his grandchildren to top the Christmas tree, eating Oreos and drinking straight from the milk carton in the middle of the night, or dancing in the street with his wife, Victoria, during a red light at the intersection of Braddock and Russell. He would “give you a nickel” if you could name the 1960s artist singing on the radio. He’d send you recipes for the perfect pork chop, articles about the latest threat to justice and democracy, and a heads up about recent sunscreen recalls. He was deeply devoted to playing the guitar, discovering the best deal on good wine, and playing the lottery. He never said goodbye without also holding up his hand to sign “I love you.”

He had the timing of a stand-up comedian, all the wisdom of a perfect story-teller, and an unfulfilled desire to travel the world. He was just beginning to discover what retirement was like and between the Rock ’n Roll cruises he took with Victoria, his long ponytail, and his Bohemian pants, he confirmed his family’s suspicion that he really did dream of being the next great American folk singer. He was a lively wedding dancer, a proficient recaller of sports stats, and even attended MLB professional umpire school. Gerry was an expert magician, the friend you were thankful to call yours, and as far as his family knew, he was “the strongest man in the world.”

Gerry is preceded in death by his mother and father.

Gerry is survived by his wife of 57 years, Victoria, his children, Christy Przystawik (Tom Przystawik), Greta Gordon (Jim Gordon), Brooke Harris (Ben Harris), Josh Hebert, and Marlea Hebert (Anthony DiBerardinis). His brother, Tom Hebert (Maria Hebert), and his ten grandchildren Gunter, Annika, Amelie, Harper, Sadie, Baily, Brighid, Adrian, Tyler, and Abe.

A funeral service will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, Sept. 16, 2023, at Fairlington United Methodist Church.

In lieu of flowers donations can be made in honor of Gerry to The Campaign Legal Center, ALIVE, Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, Fairlington United Methodist Church (music program), and Greater Birmingham Ministries.
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know and love the sandwich fare, hot buffet and cupcakes. The casual vibe of the neighborhood cafe led to a strong catering customer base for their upscale events.

Familiar faces of the employees working in the cafe became integral to the business’s success. When Manor decided to close the cafe in 2016 to focus on the catering business, employees and equipment moved to their space behind the cafe down the alley off North Alfred Street. Those employees who worked at the cafe were offered jobs to work with the catering business, while new hires helped the company grow.

One of those employees was Orn Jitwiwat, who was hired in 2004 and got her start from the ground up as a trusted sandwich maker at the cafe. Interested in culinary school, she took on the job as a work-study and eventually began bookkeeping for Bittersweet due to her background in finance. The opportunities presented to her through Bittersweet helped her envision her goals of intersecting hospitality with business.

In 2018, she reached her ultimate goal and was promoted to general manager. Tales of success like Jitwiwat’s are common in the Bittersweet Catering family.

“Bittersweet has a unique focus on the back of house where we operate not just as a team but a family and this inclusion to be part of a whole creates great opportunities for the staff,” Jitwiwat said. This team philosophy and respect for each role of the business have been key for the retention of employees during the past 40 years: more than half of Bittersweet’s employees have been with the company for at least 10 years. Building up from a catering company and expanding to a cafe and other ventures in and around Old Town, the staff were presented with interesting opportunities along the way.

The business side of Bittersweet was changing and adapting but the civics side remained unwavering. When First Night Alexandria started in 1994, Bittersweet Cafe joined the event and stayed open for families.

“Musical acts and events for kids provided a place to grab a hot chocolate on the way to fireworks. The cafe and catering services were

### In Memoriam

**Lee Roy Steele**

September 10, 1918 - September 13, 2011

Gone but not forgotten. He sleeps in Jesus.

Your loving wife,
Mrs. Shirley Ann Sanders Steele
Your son,
Robert Lee Steele

---

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closed on New Year’s Day so staff could also enjoy the holiday with their families,” Jutwiwat said.

Connecting with the broader community through events such as First Night underscores Bittersweet’s priorities. Long-standing pride in being able to support and celebrate with Alexandrians is the type of ethos practiced among the team at Bittersweet.

Assistant Manager Jeffrey Allen has been with Bittersweet for more than 20 years and has experienced first-hand Bittersweet’s family culture. Catering life celebrations such as marriages and births creates a cycle of customers.

“Because we are good at what we do, we have had the privilege to serve generations of Alexandrian families which has been rewarding. We are

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Bittersweet has a unique focus on the back of house where we operate not just as a team but a family and this inclusion to be part of a whole creates great opportunities for the staff.”

– Orn Jitwiwat, Bittersweet employee

able to celebrate our return customers and their families through their special events,” Allen said.

This sense of community helped Bittersweet survive the pandemic.

The business pivoted yet again. With social distancing and a general pause on group celebrations, Bittersweet started online ordering for deliveries and a physical pick-up location called Commissary by Bittersweet. Located down the back alley, customers could come by to purchase grab-and-go items such as their favorite sandwiches.

“Customers missed the cafe so this was a concept where favorites were offered and we got to see familiar faces and stay connected,” Allen recalled.

Being flexible during the pandemic kept the business engaged with the community through word of mouth about the Commissary by Bittersweet and online deliveries.

“We went into survival mode as a business and had to adjust and figure out what was going to work with what we had around us. We not only had to adjust the business but adjust to the community,” Assistant General Manager Alberto Trevizo explained.

As life and corporate events

Bittersweet’s leadership team from left to right: Andy Veszelovszky, Alberto Trevizo, Orn Jitwiwat.
opened up again, Bittersweet’s current iteration has grown quickly. Their leadership is investing in more equipment, delivery trucks and employees to help structure the desired changes.

“Being able to retain our team, we were able to grow 50% quicker than we thought in one year,” Trevizo said. Retaining staff during the pandemic provided a strong base for future growth. Adding in a balanced leadership model and an emphasis on teamwork and family, employees say they feel valued.

“Bittersweet leadership looks at the whole picture when considering their staff, which has contributed mightily to its 40 years of success. There is an emphasis on work-life balance, benefits, 401k, group health and dental and their own version of profit sharing,” Allen outlined. “As we grow, we have a great blend of institutional knowledge and new folks with fresh ideas to help be a part of the success of Bittersweet.”

Allen emphasizes the importance of connection and family as some of the most successful ingredients in Bittersweet Catering’s practice.

“The same people who helped us survive are the same people helping us grow. That is community. That is family,” Allen said.

-kmurphy@alextimes.com

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AlexandriaTimes
On Monday, U.S. Congressman Don Beyer, Alexandria Mayor Justin Wilson, Police Chief Don Hayes, Sheriff Sean Casey and Assistant Fire Chief Andrew Duke offered remarks during a 10 a.m. ceremony at Market Square on the 22nd anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on New York City, the Pentagon and in Pennsylvania.

The various speakers remembered those who perished in the attacks, as well as the bravery of first responders – including Alexandrians – who assisted with the aftermath of the crash of American Airlines Flight 77 into the Pentagon that morning. The solemn occasion began with a presentation of the colors by the Joint Public Safety Honor Guard and ended with the symbolic ringing of the bell in the Return to Quarters Ceremony.

A large contingent of first responders attended the ceremony, along with several members of City Council, business leaders and other residents. Lt. Liz Magyar of the Alexandria Police Department served as the master of ceremonies, while Wilson gave welcoming and closing remarks.
‘Two on the Aisle, Three in a Van’ is an irreverent Little Theatre farce

BY THOMPSON ESKEW

The Little Theatre of Alexandria’s production of “Two on the Aisle, Three in a Van” opened Saturday, bringing director Mike Donahue’s interpretation of Mary Lynn Dobson’s 2009 play to the stage with elements of maturity and irreverent humor.

“I would call it a farce,” Donahue said. “It is a door-slamming-farce-type comedy because it is heightened. During the rehearsal period, we worked on the genuineness of the relationships between characters.”

The play is set in the present day over the span of several months, following the misadventures of 10 crew members of a local theater, offering a metacommendary on the process of producing a play. From the stagehands to the actors and directors, each character navigates through their personal and professional drama behind the scenes in a packed parking lot during the six plays of their current season.

LTA’s adaptation of the play also allows each character their own time in the spotlight, first introducing them as seemingly one-dimensional characters before transforming them into multifaceted individuals with their own strengths and weaknesses thanks to the skill of the actors.

John Paul Odle, who grew up in Old Town, delivers a grounded depiction of Mike, a crew member who is offered a promotion that promises to be full of stress and responsibility. Throughout the play’s six scenes, the audience begins to understand not only the difficulties that Mike goes through, but also those of his predecessor, of whom the audience only catches small glimpses.

The position Mike is thrust into also feeds into the relationships he maintains between his cast and fellow crew members, who are collectively depicted as a dysfunctional “found family” bonded through the Neighborhood Actors Summerfun Repertory Theatre.

Another character who stands out is the 15-year-old child star Robyn, personified by Naomi Bertha in a lightheartedly comedic portrayal of innocence amongst a crew of jaded adults. The naivety Bertha brings to the character often bolsters the mature humor in an ironic fashion which leaves the audience howling.

But nothing innocent can be turned jaded or indecent without the work of an outside force, and Ian Wade’s portrayal of the overly ambitious Eric is just that. The anger and manipulative personality that Wade brings to the stage has the audience equally disgusted by his actions and perplexed by his motivation to bring controversy to every play they produce — often resulting in him being the butt of the joke.

The remaining cast have their own presence and comedic effect on the audience as well. Anna Brodnax’s portrayal of the stardom-desiring Meredith perfectly counteracts the actions of Eleanor Tappcott’s Harriet, a humble housewife who appears to act in the theater as a means of enjoyment rather than climbing the ladder to fame. Kirk Lambert’s role as Jeff, the theater’s first director, brings an apt mix of overt positivity and humor to the chaos of the behind-the-scenes setting.

Joe Neff perfectly captures the “annoying one” that every group has in his portrayal of Daniel. Overly energetic at the point where almost every character expresses their desire to kill him, Neff’s constant movement on stage proves to be equally annoying to the other characters as it is impressive to the audience.

No play could run without its stage crew, costume designer or tech. The characters of Jeanie (Teresa Preston), Scott (Patrick Gallagher) and Vondo (Paul Donahoe) fill these roles perfectly for the play’s fictional setting. The hippie Vondo offers the audience a textbook example of not judging a book by its cover in his heartfelt portrayal.

“Vondo is the turd in the punchbowl, but he’s a dear person. Through this whole thing, through his drugs and his drink and everything else he is a good person underneath,” Genie Baskir, one of the producers, said.

The set pieces and design further bring the narrative to life by immersing the audience into the play itself. With a faux brick wall and doors in the background, a large television hangs overhead displaying the current play of each scene.

With a fair balance of character-driven drama and comedy through bawdy language, the play has its audience intrigued by the machinations of characters who they would see as noble or right while still wanting to understand their motivations. The comedic timing of “Two on the Aisle, Three in a Van” is laid bare through the various bits sprinkled in through the first few acts, which each receive their own payoff at the proper moment and leave the audience laughing.

“Two on the Aisle, Three in a Van” runs until September 30. For tickets or more information, call 703-683-0496 or email boxoffice@thelittletheatre.com. Due to a COVID case within the production, the performances through Sunday have been canceled. The show is expected to resume September 20.

Written by Mary Lynn Dobson. Produced by Genie Baskir and Monika Stumpo. Directed by Mike Donahue.

The writer is a theatre aficionado and recent graduate of Christopher Newport University.
Fresh ideas for a comforting and relaxing home
BY FAMILY FEATURES

Updating your home can provide the perfect opportunity to explore new design styles or refresh living spaces with a new color scheme. In fact, a coat of paint can help set the mood for entire rooms in your home.

By turning to nature-inspired designs, you can create a sense of comfort and relaxation. Find a color that is gentle and airy with a touch of blue to set a restful and meditative mood. Grayed sea green is a seasonless and versatile hue that features a mid-tone blue with warm undertones and can be used in outdoor living spaces and four-season rooms alike.

To help elevate the mood in your home, consider implementing a blue hue that can update the look of nearly any of your indoor or outdoor spaces.

Coastal
Coastal looks are timeless designs that have remained relevant for years because of their positive correlation to calming beach locations. Perfect for outdoor spaces like the back yard, you can implement a more curated and personal take on the trend by shifting from "typical" coastal design that pairs beachy hues with natural textures like rope, driftwood and wicker to something more classic and natural like the Cape Cod variation by working in some nautical touches such as anchors, oars or seashells.

Modern farmhouse
In the entryway, using coastal touches is ideal for a welcoming entrance. Think of using elements like anchors or a boat-like chandelier to create a nautical theme.

Color inspiration

Try pairing beachy hues with natural textures like rope, driftwood and wicker to something more classic and natural.

Historic treasure with a private oasis

Nestled in the heart of Old Town, this magnificent Victorian residence exudes elegance and offers an opportunity to own a piece of history. High ceilings, tall windows, original heart pine floors, two wood burning fireplaces, handsome millwork and other fine details showcase the perfect blend of old-world craftsmanship with modern conveniences.

The multi-story interior is gracious and enchanting, introduced by a welcoming double door vestibule, spacious front hall and gorgeous original 9’ double doors open to the generously proportioned living room with 10’5” ceilings where entertaining is effortless. A wonderful formal dining room is a lovely setting for gatherings. Delight the chef in the sunny eat-in kitchen equipped with new stainless appliances, a period fireplace, abundant cabinetry and access to the covered porch.

The second level presents a generous family room and a delightful guest suite with access to the sunroom. The light-filled primary suite is a private respite featuring a dressing room with large closets, custom built-ins, sunroom access and an updated bath with a seamless glass shower. The third level offers two additional bedrooms, full bath and a cedar closet.

Savor the outdoors on the deep covered porch or on the expansive patio garden retreat surrounded by mature trees and specimen plantings. One off-street parking space is beyond the iron gate. This historic gem enjoys a prime location on one of Old Town’s sought-after streets, minutes to shops, restaurants, parks and the Potomac River. Now is the time to embrace the chance to create new memories in this remarkable residence.

AT A GLANCE

Address:
411 Prince St.,
Alexandria 22314

Neighborhood: Old Town

Price: $2,950,000

Bedrooms: 4

Bathrooms: 3.5

Year built: 1870

Contact:
Babs Beckwith
McEnearney Associates
703-627-5421
Modern boho reimagines the past and elevates everyday spaces like bathrooms into personal retreats designed with wellness in mind.

This style reflects a naturally minimalist design aesthetic and showcases color coordination with mood-boosting hues and joyful color. Perfect for nurseries and other spaces that should be bright and welcoming, pieces with pared-back, welcoming shapes and silhouettes that allow quality natural materials to shine are perfect for decorating the room.

Modern boho
Boho is a nature-loving and free-spirited style connected to earthly and botanical elements. From handmade décor to vintage metallic finishes, this style reimagines the past and elevates everyday spaces like bathrooms into personal retreats designed with wellness in mind.

Pastel wabi-sabi
Leaning into the modern sentiment of "less is more,” this style reflects a naturally minimalist design aesthetic and showcases color coordination with mood-boosting hues and joyful color. Perfect for nurseries and other spaces that should be bright and welcoming, pieces with pared-back, welcoming shapes and silhouettes that allow quality natural materials to shine are perfect for decorating the room.
Editorial

22 years

Most students graduating from college this year have no memory of the terrorist attacks on the United States on Sept. 11, 2001. It’s startling to realize that most students weren’t even born yet when that mid-September morning dawned so radiantly 22 years ago.

That day was indelible for those who lived through it, particularly in New York City or the D.C. metro area. We could feel the vibrations and hear the boom in Alexandria when American Airlines Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon.

Everyone who lived through that day in this city is forever marked by it.

We remember the neighbor whose son spent the night of September 10 installing Lucent phones in Tower 1, finished at 6:30 a.m. and was spared. We know the teacher whose beloved brother perished in the inferno. We admire the general whose heroic assistant pulled him from the rubble in the Pentagon.

We remember all of that, and yet our youngest generation knows none of it. Which is why it’s vital that we continue to commemorate that date – as we do in Alexandria each year on September 11 with a ceremony at City Hall. Remembering helps us heal and honor the departed, yes, but it also educates the young.

Our youngest residents need to know that Osama bin Laden used Afghanistan as his base for Al Qaeda to launch the terrorist attacks on the United States that day, killing almost 3,000 civilians on American soil. They need to know that bin Laden’s actions were evil, and that the possibility for great evil is always present.

They need to be taught that we must always be vigilant and courageous in combating evil. Yet, even more important than vigilance and courage is, perhaps surprisingly, love.

They need to know about the heroism of Welles Crowther, about whom Peggy Noonan wrote so movingly in her Wall Street Journal column on the 15th anniversary of 9/11. Crowther saved at least five people in Tower 2 by wrapping a red bandanna, which he always carried, around his nose and mouth and leading people down the one stairwell still passable.

“The way I see it, courage comes from love. There’s a big unseen current of love that hums through the world, and some plug into it more than others, more deeply and surely, and they get more power from it. And it fills them with courage. It makes everything possible,” Noonan wrote in “Remembering a hero, 15 years after 9/11.”

“People see the fallen, beat-up world around them and ask: What can I do? Maybe: Be like Welles Crowther. Take your bandanna, change the world,” Noonan wrote.

“The sky was falling and streaked with blood
I heard you calling me, then you disappeared into the dust
Up the stairs, into the fire
Up the stairs, into the fire
I need your kiss, but love and duty called you someplace higher
Somewhere up the stairs,
Into the fire”
- Bruce Springsteen, “Into the Fire”

Opinion

“Where the press is free and every man is able to read, all is safe.”
- Thomas Jefferson

Photo of the Week

The Remembrance Bell is rung at the conclusion of the city’s September 11 remembrance ceremony.

Letters

Where’s the transparency by Zoning for Housing supporters?

To the editor:

I would like to thank the Times for its thoughtful editorial of August 31, “Good policy takes time.”

The city’s Zoning for Housing proposal will bring drastic and permanent change to Alexandria’s built environment and to the lives of its existing residents, little of it an improvement. Given the city’s self-imposed November deadline for voting Zoning for Housing into law, these issues definitely need more attention and consideration than they are being given.

As the treasurer and a director of The Coalition for a Livable Alexandria, Inc. I want to respond to the questions posed in the editorial about CLA’s structure, leadership and funding sources.

CLA is a grassroots organization composed of Alexandria residents, all unpaid volunteers. We are funded exclusively by small donations from civic-minded individuals, all of which have been under $1,000. We do not receive any corporate or institutional funding.

Our mission is to ensure that all Alexandrians’ views on what should be built in their city are taken into account, rather than just those of corporations, developers or outside activists.

You were right to note the need for those involved in this debate to be more transparent. We want to make sure that Alexandrians have full confidence in CLA’s reasons for asking the city to slow down, to consider these proposals one by one and to truly listen to the residents on issues that will deeply impact the daily lives of all of us.

Our board of directors is now listed on our website, www.livablealexandria.org, and we will soon be adding their bios and other information. We would welcome similar transparency about the organizations and funding sources of the groups that are supporting the city’s plans.

- Will Shen, treasurer and director, The Coalition for a Livable Alexandria, Inc.
Letters

Are DASH subsidies worth the cost?

To the editor:

In 26 column inches, Meronne Teklu and Jim Durham "Celebrating free and frequent transit" in the August 31 Alexandria Times dance around the one fact which surely will trigger an avalanche of letters: If DASH has a $31.7 million budget – mentioned in the letter’s eighth paragraph – with 4.5 million boardings – trumpeted in the letter’s second paragraph – free city bus service means a taxpayer subsidy of $7.44 per boarding.

Since some boardings would have been free transfers under the former fare system, the taxpayer subsidy could plausibly reach $10 per trip.

The letter notes the Public Interest Research Group calculated gasoline taxes and vehicle user fees cover only about one-half of the cost of maintaining U.S. roadways. Fares cover 36% of the costs of typical transit bus systems, versus only 16% of Alexandria’s bus system before fares were eliminated.

The avalanche of letters surely will decry the $427 per household annual subsidy maintaining the free bus system entails. The statistic which is missing, though, is the public benefit resulting from subsidizing the city’s bus system by so much more than other locales and roads private passenger vehicles mainly use. This statistic needs to be calculated to reassure the public that their tax dollars are well spent and counter the avalanche of objections.

For a long time, there have been almost as many passenger vehicles in Alexandria as residents, so a good question becomes what happens if the several dozen city buses running around town at any given time were replaced by private passenger vehicles were the city to follow the avalanche of letters’ advice to “stop wasting taxpayer funds on a wasteful city bus system,” thereby making the bus riders drive instead.

Were we to take the 4.5 million annual boardings, divide by 1.1 person average car occupancy we would come out with 11,208 additional cars per day on Alexandria’s streets. Would we then have an avalanche of letters about road congestion, cut-through traffic and objections to eminent domain to add road capacity?

-Dino Drudi,
Alexandria

The opinions expressed in letters and columns are those of the writers only and do not reflect the views, nor receive the endorsement, of the Alexandria Times.

Commentary

Digging a bigger hole with the community

BY BILL ROSSELLO

Civic association leaders often find themselves going to bat for a smaller group of residents on an issue of little import to the community at large. If you are worth your salt, you address it regardless, especially in a city where elected officials seldom seem interested in a cause for regular residents.

This became glaringly apparent in light of the city’s goofy decision to place playing field light poles on the Hammond Middle School track. Virtually no one aside from the immediate neighbors of the school, some physical education teachers and some joggers are concerned.

Yet, it is in those moments of civic discourse on such an issue that you learn what city officials are really made of. How they react and interact speaks volumes about their priorities as public servants. In local government, those moments also serve as a remarkably accurate predictor of future behavior on the big issues that affect tens of thousands of residents. Despite their seemingly minor significance, they end up being moments that actually matter.

What happened at Francis C. Hammond Middle School was a simple case of the city trying to expand the capacity of a playing field at night to meet growing community demand. Installing lights for the playing field there has been proposed twice now during the past dozen years.

The surrounding community would rather not have lights, but has been willing to accept them under one simple condition: That the city control chronically abhorrent adult behavior around the field and the back parking lot at night.

On this, the city and ACPS have failed miserably. They have simply ignored valid concerns and deflected accountability among departments.

This latest time, the Department of Recreation, Parks and Community Activities applied in the spring of 2022 for a special use permit. They appropriately engaged sports groups, the School Board and the community in eight public meetings. Each time they presented the location of the light poles as outside the outer edge of the track.

But unfortunately, that placement fell within the 35-foot legal setback from a right of way, which would have violated their own rules. By the fall, it became clear to RPCA that the poles could not be placed there. Apparently, they changed the pole location to be right on the track.

Who installs light poles right on one athletic facility mere feet from the sideline of another athletic facility? Apparently our city does.

And they told absolutely no one. After the fact, RPCA deputy Jack Browand responded in the most bureaucratic manner possible to the civic association’s letter on this issue: “Pages 179 through 184 of the staff report (attached) clearly identify the three light pole’s location in the inside lane of the track.”

I see. Good CYA work on behalf of the city, but does that reflect the city’s stated priority to “ensure that engagement is efficient, effective and accessible to all stakeholders?” Hmm. Was the city afraid of openly showing the changed pole location, and therefore reopening stakeholder engagement on this topic?

In an apparent rush to beat a pending lawsuit opposing installation of lights at Hammond, RPCA began installation, initially digging holes straddling lanes two and three of the six-lane track. When alerted by Seminary Hill Association that the lights had been placed on the track, the contractor moved them to the “right” location in what most would consider lane one of the track.

Mayor Justin Wilson and two City Councilors initially blamed the contractor for the poles being placed on the track, but in subsequent comments by city officials, that assertion was notably absent. It appears that RPCA gave its contractor the wrong dimensions.

Wilson later admitted that the poles’ placement was “suboptimal.” Then he backtracked on Fox 5, saying that the final location “was clearly documented in the docket materials [11/12 Council public hearing materials]. There’s no lack of clarity on this and… I think was discussed with the community in the process leading up to it.”

That is false. The new location was not discussed with the community prior to the poles’ installation.

Two Councilors have expressed concern, but only Vice Mayor Amy Jackson has expressed outrage. ACPS was characteristically unresponsive except for the Hammond principal. Seems like the former superintendent’s “gag order” on School Board members is still in effect.

What do our local leaders’ actions on the Hammond light poles portend for the future?

If deception, incompetence and nonresponses are what we get on a small project of importance to only a few residents, why would we think city officials will behave differently on much bigger, more complex and much more expensive projects like Duke Street in Motion and the transformational overhaul of the city’s regulations in Zoning for Housing?

The writer is a civic advocate, management consultant and longtime Alexandria resident.
Monday marked the 22nd anniversary of the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, as well as Flight 93, whose passengers bravely prevented it from flying into the U.S. Capitol. When American Airlines Flight 77 struck the Pentagon, Alexandria’s first responders answered the call to help other Northern Virginia emergency responders that day.

While the enduring images of Sept. 11, 2001 focus on the World Trade Center, the attack on the Pentagon and the resilience of Americans that day is memorialized in a photo by Michael Pendergrass, which pictures fire personnel hanging an American flag on the building. One of the firefighters captured in the photo was a member of the Alexandria Fire Department.

Another emergency responder that day was Officer Francis Powers of the Alexandria Police Department. Many years later, Powers remembered 9/11 starting just like any other day. His wife went to her office two blocks from the White House, and his one-year-old son was dropped off at child care.

Powers found out about the first planes flying into the World Trade Center towers while he waited for court proceedings to begin. The third plane struck the Pentagon at 9:45 that morning.

Powers was able to reach his wife to find out she was part of the pedestrian exodus from D.C. to Virginia. His son was picked up by his grandmother. His first assignment in response to the attack was to make sure that the on-ramp for Interstate 395 off King Street remained clear for ambulances to transport injured people from the Pentagon to Alexandria Hospital.

Powers recalled the fleet of ambulances was much smaller than anticipated. The attack on the Pentagon killed 125 people in the building and all 64 people on Flight 77.

The enduring memories for Powers from that day were the smell of burning fuel, the rain of particles and ash from the fire at the Pentagon and the contrast of the day’s events with the beautiful weather overhead.

The black plume of smoke from the fire was visible from Alexandria City Hall. It took multiple days to put out the fire. The damaged parts of the Pentagon were fully repaired by September 2002, and the National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial formally opened on Sept. 11, 2008.

Out of the Attic is provided by the Office of Historic Alexandria.
Weekly Words

A DYING ART by Jay Silverman, edited by Jeff Chen

DEATH NOTICES

JOSEPH GERALD HEBERT (74), of Alexandria, Sept. 7, 2023
ROSS MICHAEL KAPLAN (82) of Alexandria, Sept. 3, 2023
COLLEEN A. SHEEHAN (61), of Alexandria, Sept. 1, 2023
MARY DAY-STOKES (97), of Alexandria, Aug. 22, 2023

Solutions from last week

A R T I C L E L E M O N S O S O
C O U N D I E R E X U D E D C H E W
G O L D M I N E R V E R I T E R I L E
R E G I S T E R I C A N C L I F F S
U D O N A M Y P A U L G O I P O
B I N O R A A T T I F E R E T R A P
T E M P O S E T H I C A L V O U G E
W E D G R A V I T A S O E R
B A B A R G A I N E D S E T T L E
A L O H A J U D A S A N N A
G E T A T U M S O W N A B Y S S
H I S S B A L E D B L O O P
A T T A C K R C R U M B L O W L Y
P O R A S P I R A T E L E I
E V O K E L A C O N I C H O R D E S
D E P E N D O N A N D L A B
I N D I E R A T O M P A P A L B A
A T C O S T A K I N I D I C I E S
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O M N I H U M A N E H O T S H O T S
S P A N M O R S E I N S T A N T

ACROSS
1 Greek yogurt brand
6 "Fawlty Towers" network
9 Proverbial maker of waste
14 Ditch at the altar
18 Target rival, once
19 Camembert relative
20 Small bay
21 Brunei’s continent
22 Dora’s cousin, on a desert trek?
24 Property claims
25 Mom’s mom
26 Movie SFX
27 State shaped like two sets of black squares on the sides of this grid
28 “Oh, dear god, not another improv troupe?”
29 Like neat freaks
32 Sensei’s school
34 ___ out a win
35 Country in West 21-Across
36 Tom tossing ridiculously improbable touchdowns?
37 Like French toast
38 Org. employing ecologists
39 Toss, in Zoomer slang
40 Teased
42 School for Simone
43 “My Little ___”
44 Puts into law
45 Keanu’s role in “The Matrix”
46 Beloved
48 Gucci competitor
49 Pro near Penguins and Pirates
50 Worldwide humanitarian relief org.
51 Funny
52 Result of slow Wi-Fi
53 “Say what?” utterances
55 Simmered down
56 Type type
57 Art one might regret buying
59 Trevor who won the 2023 Erasmus Prize
60 Legitimate
63 Top 10 lists and such
66 Like modern paint and pipes
67 Abstinence program?
70 More vexing, as a problem
71 Not, for a Scot
72 State shaped like two sets of black squares on the sides of this grid
73 More quirky

DOWN
1 Approves
2 Apple variety?
3 Australia has over 40 million of them
4 Positional number
5 Sow’s spot
6 Spot for a loaf
7 Yellowstone tributary named for sheep
8 Company VIP
9 Hawaiian hub
10 Japanese cartoon style
11 Japanese cartoon style
12 Built for speed
13 Inherent inclination
14 “___ Little Pill” (Broadway show)
15 Country in West 21-Across
16 Serve as a go-between
17 Bronzed
18 Tiny amount
23 ___ as dishwater
27 State shaped like two sets of black squares on the sides of this grid
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29 “Am not!” retort
31 Serve well done?
33 Toronto pro
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A D Y I N G A R T by Jay Silverman, edited by Jeff Chen

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A D Y I N G A R T by Jay Silverman, edited by Jeff Chen
ALEXANDRIA TIMES
22304-5720
22301-1215
VA
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2023

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION & CITY COUNCIL
OCTOBER 2023

The items described below will be heard by the Planning Commission and the City Council on the dates and times listed below. NOTICE: Some of the items listed below may be placed on a Consent Calendar. A consent item will be approved at the beginning of the meeting without discussion unless someone asks that it be taken off the Consent Calendar and considered separately. The Planning Commission reserves the right to recess and continue the Public Hearing to a future date. For further information, call the Department of Planning & Zoning at 703.746.4666 or visit www.alexandriavirginia.gov/dockets.

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2023 7:00 PM, CITY HALL

CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER
301 KING STREET
ROOM 2400
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

ALEXANDRIA CITY COUNCIL
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2023 9:30 AM, CITY HALL
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER
ROOM 2400
301 KING STREET
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

The October 3, 2023, Alexandria Planning Commission Public Hearing is being held in the Council Chamber (301 King Street, Room 2400 Alexandria, Virginia, 22314) and electronically. Members of the Planning Commission and staff are participating in-person. The Planning Commission Public Hearing can be accessed by the public in the City Council Chamber, through the live broadcast on the government channel 70, streaming on the City's website, and can be accessed via Zoom Webinar by the following link:

Planning Commission (Public Hearing Webinar):

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN__uptG4KhhRsiNQWfjqvSJHv#

Zoom Audio Conference:
Dial in: 301-715-8929
Webinar ID: 924 1413 8850
Password: 036593

City Council (Public Hearing Webinar)
Registration Link:
https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_8oCQ8ZyRyvqmhQw610Pf

Zoom Audio Conference:
Dial-in number: 301-715-8929
Webinar ID: 954 1662 9057
Webinar Passcode: 923257

Public comment will be received at the meetings. The public may submit comments in advance to Department of Planning & Zoning staff at PlanComm@alexandriavirginia.gov for the Planning Commission Hearing; or to the City Clerk at CouncilComment@alexandriavirginia.gov for the City Council Hearing; or make public comments on the day of either Hearing.

For reasonable disability accommodation for the Planning Commission Hearing, contact Lisa Chase at alcia.chase@alexandriavirginia.gov or 703.746.4666, Virginia Relay 711. We request that you provide a 48-hour notice so that the proper arrangements may be made.

Zoning Text Amendment
#2023-00004
(A) Initiation of a text amendment and (B) Public Hearing and consideration of a text amendment for minor updates to the Zoning Ordinance related to commercial uses. Staff: City of Alexandria – Department of Planning & Zoning

Special Use Permit #2023-00065 1303 King Street – Galactic Panther
Public Hearing and consideration of a Special Use Permit to provide live entertainment; zoned: KR/ King Street Urban Retail.
Applicant: Erik Muendel

Special Use Permit #2023-00057 103 East Del Ray Avenue
Public Hearing and consideration of a request for a Special Use Permit to: (A) construct a new single-family dwelling on a developed substandard lot with lot modifications and; (B) a one space parking reduction; zoned: R-2-S/Single and two-family.
Applicant: Deyi Awada

Zoning Text Amendment #2023-00005
(A) Initiation of a text amendment and (B) Public Hearing and consideration of a text amendment to Article VI, Section 300 of the Zoning Ordinance, Special and Overlay Zones/ Floodplain Districts
Staff: City of Alexandria - Department of Transportation & Environmental Services

Development Special Use Permit #2023-10006
801 S. Payne Street – Alexandria Fire Department Burn Building
Public Hearing and consideration of a request for a Development Special Use Permit with site plan for the demolition and reconstruction of a non-habitable burn building, including a Special Use Permit for expansion of a noncomplying use; a Special Use Permit for a building taller than 30 feet; and modifications to the crown coverage requirements; zoned: UT/ Utility and Transportation
Applicant: City of Alexandria, represented by Noah Bergman, of Wiley|Wilson on behalf of the Department of General Services
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